

March 9, 2023
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Human Services Committee

In Support of SB 1178 AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS.

Good afternoon, Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and members of the Human Services Committee. District 1199NE represents 26,000 healthcare workers in both the public and private sector in Connecticut. This includes approximately 7,000 nursing home employees, 2,500 group home employees, and 10,000 Medicaid waiver personal care attendants. We submit this testimony in support of SB 1178.

Home care workers, group home workers, and nursing home workers frequently find themselves having to work through sickness because not working means not earning money to pay bills, pay rent, and put food on the table. A day of missed work could mean late fees. A week of missed work could mean being behind on rent. A month of missed work could mean eviction and homelessness. Yet this is the grim reality for so many of our members. 32% of PCAs, for example, have been late on rent or mortgage in the last year.

Home care workers, group home workers, and nursing home workers have had to endure the hardship of working while sick or injured, placing not just their own health and lives at risk but also placing at risk the health and lives of their consumer-employers. Lifting and transferring individuals while having a back pain, for example, could exacerbate the pain into a debilitating injury such as a herniated disc; and it could also result in injury for the person being lifted or transferred. Caring for consumers while having Covid or Influenza could spread the contagion to the consumers or other members of the household.

Everyone should be able to take time off to rest and recuperate, especially when they are sick or injured. Sick days (and paid time off, in general) should be a human right for all workers. Please support SB 1178. Thank you for your time.